

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 18, 2019
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
7:00 p.m.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2019 in the Council Chambers of the City Hall and Police Department at 7:00 p.m. with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, James J. Garby, Jr., Curtis B. Leak, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk; and William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney.

Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m.

Councilmember Evans gave the Invocation and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager explained that there needed to be two (2) amendments to the agenda: remove consideration of the April 16, 2019 regular meeting minutes from the Consent Agenda, and add consideration of a resolution endorsing the application for a comprehensive bicycle planning grant to the Community Development Update.

Councilmember Evans explained that she would like to remove from the Consent Agenda Item B, consideration of a resolution supporting utilization of regional councils of government for delivery of state services for clarification.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to amend and approve the agenda as discussed.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING EMPLOYEE – ROBERT ELLIS

Mayor Pro Tem Adams explained that she requested Councilmember Leak join her in recognizing Mr. Ellis since Councilmember Leak was the longest serving Councilmember. She then read the plaque:

***IN SINCERE APPRECIATION
to
ROBERT A. ELLIS
TREATMENT PLANTS DIRECTOR***

***JUNE 1976-DECEMBER 1980
FEBRUARY 1981 – JUNE 2019***

In special tribute for over 43 years of dedicated public service as an employee of the City of Laurinburg. Hired first as an Operator I in June 1976, Robert left the City in December 1980, but returned in February, 1981 as a Maintenance/Mechanic Operator II. He was promoted to Treatment Plants Director on June 1, 1994 and served in that position until his retirement on June 30, 2019.

The Mayor and the Laurinburg City Council express their sincere appreciation for his unselfish professional service to the citizens of Laurinburg and this community. His wide range of knowledge, strong work ethic, intense dedication, and strong leadership skills ensured that the citizens of Laurinburg received safe and abundant water, a service that is taken for granted by many. Widely respected by employees throughout the City and by citizens within the community, he is the epitome of a true public servant. He worked tirelessly and effectively to serve the citizens of this community and to make our City a better place to live for all the citizens of Laurinburg.

We wish him many more years of continued success in the next chapter of his life.

Presented this the 18th day of June, 2019.

*Matthew Block, MD
Mayor*

*Mary Jo Adams
Mayor Pro Tempore*

*Mary Evans
Councilmember*

*James J. Garby, Jr.
Councilmember*

*Curtis B. Leak
Councilmember*

*Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.
Councilmember*

Mr. Ellis thanked Council and the Mayor.

North Carolina State Representative Garland Pierce stated that he would be presenting the Order of the Long Leaf Pine to Mr. Robert Ellis, and that he received many recommendation letters filled with great praise for Mr. Ellis. He provided a brief history of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Mr. Ellis thanked Representative Pierce. He stated that his career at the City of Laurinburg had been quite a journey, and that he appreciated the opportunities afforded him. He added that he believed he had done as much for the City and citizens as had been done for him.

SPECIAL AWARD

Mayor Block explained that the special award was for someone that had been a fixture in the community, had touched many lives, and consistently did an excellent job. He then read Resolution No. R-2019-05 awarding the Key to the City to Mr. Sandy Callan.

RESOLUTION NO. R-2019-05

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG
AWARDING THE KEY TO THE CITY
TO SANDY CALLAN**

WHEREAS, Sandy Callan has been News Director for WLNC-Radio for thirty-one (31) years and will be retiring June 30, 2019 in order to take care of his wife who is in declining health; and

WHEREAS, Sandy has attended virtually every Laurinburg City Council meeting, Scotland County Board of Commissioners meeting, and Scotland County Board of Education meeting, and countless community events throughout the entire County; and

WHEREAS, Sandy has been diligent and dedicated to providing the citizens of the community with the most up-to-date, accurate, and unbiased news as well as being a source for accurate historical information for Scotland County; and

WHEREAS, it is often the case during governmental meetings, that Sandy provides vital information or clarifies misinformation to the governing board; and

WHEREAS, Sandy has provided his time and talents in numerous ways in the community including volunteering on several non-profit boards, serving as emcee at events such as the John Blue Cotton Festival and Laurel Fest, hosted the "Spotlight on Education" segment on WLNC Radio whereby he visited schools and interviewed students about activities; and

WHEREAS, Sandy is a true asset to this community and has served the community well and will be greatly missed upon his retirement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG that the Key to the City of Laurinburg is hereby awarded to Sandy Callan to be presented at the June 18, 2019 Laurinburg City Council meeting.

Adopted this the 21st day of May, 2019.

Mr. Callan thanked the Mayor and Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Block briefly reviewed public comment procedures.

Ms. Joyce Davis, 202 N. Caledonia Road, expressed appreciation to Mr. Stacey McQuage and the Sanitation Department for the assistance given during Hurricane Florence. She then discussed a situation with a City utility customer who had her utilities cut off because she owed \$1.00. She asked if the City had a petty cash fund for occasions such as this.

Councilmember Leak explained that the City has a program called “WARM” whereby customers round-off utility bills and the extra funds are provided to Church Community Services to provide assistance with utility bills.

Ms. Davis explained that she would appreciate Council discussing recreation, especially something near I. Ellis Johnson School.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he represents the City on the Scotland County Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee. He added that he had seen proposals for improving Washington Park, and that every park in Scotland County would be improved in some fashion.

Mr. Justin Davis, 307 Phritz Street, expressed concern about the lack of activities for children and teenagers.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Block reviewed the Consent Agenda:

- a) Consider minutes of March 19, 2019 regular meeting
- b) Consider Resolution No. R-2019-06 Resolution Supporting Utilization of Regional Councils of Government for Delivery of State Services
- c) Consider Ordinance No. O-2019-16 Amending FY 18-19 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (O-2018-07) by Increasing Fund Balance Appropriated and Allocate to Beautification-Contracted Services (C-3)

Councilmember Garby moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Adams, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Garby, Adams, Williamson, Leak, Evans

Nays: None

CONSIDER RESOLUTION REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS FOR THE DELIVERY OF STATE SERVICES

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. O-2019-06 regarding utilization of regional councils of governments for the delivery of state services. She explained that this resolution was requested by the 16 regional councils of government from their member local governments to send to the General Assembly so that the councils of government can operate regional programs for the state and save money.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Williamson, Evans, Leak, Garby
Nays: None
(Resolution No. R-2019-06 on file in the City Clerk's office)

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Block explained that the public hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget was mandated. He opened the public hearing.

The City Manager explained that Council needed to approve the FY 2019-2020 Fee Schedule and the five-year Capital Improvement Plan before considering approving the FY 2019-2020 budget. He further explained that the changes in the Fee Schedule included a \$1,000.00 deposit for fire hydrant and included implementation of the municipal vehicle fee. He added that all other fees and rates were unchanged. He further added that the budget was based upon the high-level direction from Council. He further added that once approved, Council would receive a line-item budget.

CONSIDER FY 2019-2020 FEE SCHEDULE

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, the City Manager explained that the \$1,000.00 deposit for the hydrant meter was so that if a customer wanted to use a City hydrant to obtain water, the deposit was required to ensure that the hydrant was used properly and undamaged. He added that once the hydrant had been used and condition approved by City staff, the deposit would be returned, and the charge for the water would be applied to the customer.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director, explained that this service was being mainly provided for contractors doing boring work. He added that currently there is a fill station at Public Works for contractors to utilize; however, if the contractor is working in Laurel Hill or out in the county, the Public Works facility was inconvenient.

Upon questions by Councilmember Evans, the City Manager explained that the Municipal Vehicle Fee would be collected by the state when vehicles are registered with the state. He added that this fee applied only to City residents, and that all of the fee would be sent to the City.

Mrs. Carrie Neal, Finance Director, explained that the process begins when the City certifies its tax rates with Scotland County, which is done every year once the budget is approved. Scotland County updates the VTS System which reads from the North Carolina Department of Revenue to the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The DMV system is updated, and when a City resident pays the tax and tag for registered vehicles, they will also pay the Municipal Vehicle Fee.

Upon questions by Councilmember Evans, Mrs. Neal explained that Scotland County has a list of vehicles owned by City residents. She added that citizens would not be given a sticker for the Municipal Vehicle Fee.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Neal explained that every registered vehicle in the City would be assessed the Municipal Vehicle Fee.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mrs. Neal explained that boat and utility trailers are also considered vehicles and would be assessed the Municipal Vehicle Fee.

Mayor Block closed the public hearing.

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and carried by a vote of 4-1 to approve the FY 2019-2020 Fee Schedule.

Councilmember Adams explained that she was opposed to the Municipal Vehicle Fee because it was an unnecessary burden on citizens at this time.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and carried unanimously to approve the City of Laurinburg FY 2020-2025 Capital Improvement Plan.

FY 2019-2020 BUDGET

Councilmember Evans moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2019-17 Budget Appropriations Ordinance for FY 2019-2020. Councilmember Leak seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Leak, Adams, Garby, Williamson
Nays: None
(Ordinance No. O-2019-17 on file in city clerk's office)

Councilmember Adams explained that she voted in favor of the budget even though she was opposed to the Municipal Vehicle Fee included in the Fee Schedule.

DELEGATION

LEON BUTLER-CONCERNS

Mr. Leon Butler was not present.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE CONTRACT TO AUDIT ACCOUNTS WITH ROCHE, HEAD & ASSOCIATES, PLLC AND CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE ENGAGEMENT LETTER WITH ROCHE, HEAD & ASSOCIATES, PLLC FOR AUDIT OF THE CITY'S FISCAL RECORDS ENDING JUNE 30, 2019

The City Manager explained that this is the annual contract and engagement letter for auditing services. The maximum amount is \$35,500.00 and \$2,400.00 for preparation of the data collection form, for a total of \$37,900.00 for year ending June 30, 2019.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to execute contract to audit accounts with Roche, Head & Associates, PLLC and authorize the Mayor and City Manager to execute the engagement letter with Roche, Head & Associates, PLLC for audit of the City's fiscal records ending June 30, 2019.

CONSIDER FAIR LAKE DAM/NC SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION REQUEST

The City Manager explained that Fair Lake Dam near the Woodrun and Lakewood Hills subdivisions suffered significant damage due to Hurricane Florence. This is privately owned property maintained by the Homeowner's Association of the neighborhoods. He added that there was City-owned property and infrastructure downstream from this dam on Woodrun Drive, and that the City's infrastructure was also damaged during Hurricane Florence. The North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Division has required that the dam be cleared of all underbrush and loose debris prior to being able to make a complete repair assessment, and funds are being requested by the State of North Carolina for these repairs. The property owners need assistance with hauling off the debris which would require City staff traveling down a privately-owned road to collect the debris. Since the City would benefit from the cleaning and debris removal, the property owners are requesting that the City waive collection fees normally charged for the collection of any solid waste from vacant properties.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and carried unanimously to authorize City staff to travel down a privately-owned road to collect the debris and to waive the collection fees associated with the debris removal.

CONSIDER AMENDING THE FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

The City Manager explained that staff was requesting that Council Update Façade Grant language with some policy adjustments/change in wording and new percentages with an overall capped amount for grants. He added that the Downtown Advisory Committee had recommended the changes.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to approve the recommended changes to the Façade Grant Program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Mr. Mandeville gave the following update:

- Code Enforcement: Staff conducted research with other municipalities in the area with results as follows:
 - Staff spoke with employees of Raeford, Rockingham, Hope Mills, Aberdeen, Spring Lake and Sanford.
 - Raeford, Rockingham and Aberdeen primarily do reactive code enforcement.
 - Sanford and Hope Mills do proactive. Sanford has three (3) dedicated code enforcement officers and Hope Mills has one (1) dedicated code enforcement officer.
 - None of the municipalities have limits on how many vehicles can be in a yard or where the vehicles can be parked.
 - Aberdeen is looking at rewriting UDO and possibly going to look into requiring hard surface parking, but not sure if that will pass.

Councilmember Evans stated that she noticed in the assessment provided by the grant administrator for the Produce Market Road Area Community Development Block Grant-Infrastructure, one of the findings was that the City needed to be more proactive in code enforcement.

Mr. Mandeville explained that if Council wanted City staff to be more proactive with code enforcement, then a dedicated code enforcement officer would need to be added to staff. He added that the current employee performs multiple jobs.

- Bicycle Grant – Applying for bicycle grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) that will provide for developing a plan. Usually there are 10-12 grants awarded each year, and last year 25 applications were submitted. The cost of a plan would be from \$45,000.00 to \$60,000.00, which would require the City to pay 20%, or \$9,000.00 to \$12,000.00, depending upon amount of grant. He has letters of support for the grant and is obtaining more. He requested that Council approve the resolution to be discussed later in the meeting.
- The City, County and Scotland County Economic Development Corporation did not receive the Brownsfield grant which was applied for earlier in the year. The engineering company that worked with the City on that is trying to get information from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about the application's deficiencies so that the next application can be made stronger. Approximately 10-12 sites in the City and County were identified as contaminated sites, with the former concrete plant across the railroad tracks on Gill Street being identified as a potential site. With the three (3) entities working together, the application was for \$600,000.00 versus \$200,000.00 if the City applied as an individual entity.

Councilmember Adams explained that in order to get funding from DOT for a bicycle path, sidewalks, etc. the plan must be in place first.

- Meetings held with WRAL about a marketing campaign called WRAL Spotlight. The cost is \$4,000.00 monthly with a six (6) month minimum timeframe.

Following discussion, the City Manager explained that the information presented by WRAL to staff would be emailed to Council.

Councilmember Adams suggested that this be added to the July agenda for further discussion once Council has more information.

Mr. Mandeville explained that there was a possibility that a representative from WRAL could come present the information to Council.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce, the EDC, the County and the Scotland County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) were aware of the proposal from WRAL; however, the other entities were involved in some other things and did not express interest in participating at this time.

Mayor Block clarified that it was consensus of Council to hear more information about the proposal from WRAL at the July meeting.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, Mr. Mandeville explained that the City would hire a consultant to create a bicycle plan for the City with the bicycle grant, if the grant was funded.

Councilmember Adams added that a citizen committee would be formed to work with Mr. Mandeville, the consultant and the Lumber River Council of Government (COG) Rural Planning Organization to develop the Bicycle Plan.

The City Manager explained that without a plan, the City was ineligible for DOT funding. He added that the Council had voted on three (3) sidewalk projects whereby DOT pays 80% and the City would pay 20%. He further added that the City and the Town of Pembroke are the only municipalities in the region with approved Pedestrian Plans.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that Mrs. Janet Robertson of the Lumber River COG had been scheduled for the last two (2) months to update Council on the Pedestrian Plan; however there were right-of-way issues with one of the sidewalk projects and had to get estimates from DOT for the right-of-way.

Councilmember Adams added that the idea for applying for the bicycle grant came from the Citizen Input Session.

Mr. Mandeville explained that the fruit orchard at Washington Park was beginning to produce fruit. He added that the trees were being trimmed properly and pears and apples would be ready in September and October. He further added that the figs had not begun producing but the trees had been trimmed several years ago with the hope that they would produce in the future.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2019-07 endorsing the application for a comprehensive bicycle planning grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Garby, Leak, Williamson
Nays: None
(Resolution No. R-2019-07 on file in city clerk's office)

UPDATE ON COUNTY WATER SYSTEM

The City Manager explained that the City's water engineer had conducted an analysis concerning the County's offer of giving the City the County Water System. He provided a brief history of the County Water System and the issues that the State had with the County's seven (7) County Water Districts with the additional testing requirements. He added that the County pays semi-annual notes its water system, and pay the City for billing and all repairs and maintenance on the system. Meetings have been held with the County Manager and appropriate City and County staff to develop a plan to assist the County but at the same time not harm City customers. The City Attorney has been working on an agreement which was sent to the County Manager earlier in the day. The broad concept is that if all of the County Water Districts fall under the City, it would operate under the City's identification number with the State, so the additional testing that the County is having to conduct would not be required once the City-treated water passes the master meter in the County. The current discussions have revolved around everything except ownership of the assets being under the auspices of the City. If both governing boards approve the proposed arrangement, the City would handle all operations, billing and collection, and would set up a capital project fund where the County's existing reserve would be placed, and then revenue would go into that fund. When the County's loans with the United States Department of Agriculture which is 2034, the County would deed the assets over to the City providing the City complete ownership of the system. The County's water rates are in line with the City's out of city limits water rates. The County water rates are in-line with the City's out of city limits water rates.

Upon questions by Councilmember Garby, the City Manager explained that the City would be paying the debt for the County out of the revenue placed in the capital project fund. He added that Willis Engineers and staff had carefully reviewed the data including the revenues and profits. He added that if Council did not wish to pursue an interlocal agreement with the County, then the County would have to digest the additional testing fees, and then once the loan was paid off, then the assets would become the City's.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, the City Manager explained that if Council authorizes staff to proceed with negotiations, the County Manager had indicated that the City would send a bi-annual check to the County for the exact amount of the principal and interest for the USDA loan out of the capital project fund. He added that the capital project fund would increase from the revenues collected for maintenance and repairs.

Upon question by Councilmember Garby, the City Manager explained that that County's Water Districts were in much better financial position than seven (7) years ago. He added that the County repainted all three (3) of its water tanks this past year.

Following further discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and carried unanimously for the City Manager to continue discussions with Scotland County concerning an interlocal agreement for the City to assume control and ownership of the County Water System.

INFORMATION ON JULY 4TH ANNUAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY

The City Manager explained that The City will be holding its Annual Fourth of July Fireworks Display on Thursday, July 4th at Pate Stadium, Scotland High School. The Display will begin at approximately 9:15 p.m., depending upon light conditions. Gates will open at 7:00 p.m. The Scotland High School Band Boosters will be selling refreshments including hot dogs, snacks and drinks.

APPOINTMENT

LAURINBURG-MAXTON AIRPORT COMMISSION

Mayor Block explained that Mrs. Ella Morris' term on the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission was expiring. He added that Mrs. Morris wanted to continue serving, and that an application from Mrs. Dolores "Dee" Hammond had also been submitted.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Leak, and unanimously carried to reappoint Mrs. Ella Morris to the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission for a three-year term.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Councilmember Adams stated that a wonderful ceremony was held honoring Mr. J. Dickson Phillips with a historical marker placed across the street from the City Hall and Police Department.

Councilmember Williamson stated that he would miss Mr. Sandy Callan.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Mr. Callan explained that Mr. Dave Wells would be the News Director at WLNC Radio upon his retirement.

Councilmember Leak requested that discussion about the North Fire Station be placed on the July agenda.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:18 p.m. motion was made by Councilmember Adams to go into closed session pursuant to N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) for personnel reason. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and carried unanimously.

At 8:59 p.m., motion was made by Councilmember Adams, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to adjourn the closed session and resume the regular meeting.

SET CITY MANAGER’S SALARY

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to increase the City Manager’s salary by four percent (4%) which brings the salary to \$126,777.44 effective July 1, 2019.

Councilmember Adams moved to extend the City Manager’s contract by two (2) years. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Leak. Mayor Block requested a roll call vote, and the result was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Leak, Williamson,

Nays: Garby, Evans

Councilmember Garby stated that his vote opposing the contract extension for the City Manager was not a vote of no-confidence of the City Manager, but that he did not believe the contract extension was needed at this time.

ADJOURN

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Mary Jo Adams, Mayor Pro Tem

Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk